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INFORMAL HISTORY OF THE WOMEN'S  
RULES AT UNC, 1967-1972  
Katherine Carmichael

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AN INFORMAL HISTORY OF THE WOMEN'S RULES  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA, 1967 - 1972  
WITH PREFATORY REMARKS  
by Katherine Carmichael, March 29, 1977

President Hoffman, Miss Elliott, Distinguished Friends: I had intended to address all of the special distinguished guests by name; but since we are all special guests, all distinguished guests, all comrades, I merely lump us together in a sort of potpourri with the term distinguished friends.

For a quarter of a century now I have participated in the Chi Omega North Carolina Distinguished Service Award for women; but it has been as a pensioner who must pick up the crumbs from the table. Now as Vice Chancellor Hunt has said, I have been dismissed from the Selection Committee, and in consequence the Committee has seen fit to grant me the Distinguished Service Award. Let me remind you that old age hath yet its honor and its due -- not that this award is my due; it is, instead, something for which I am grateful. And I am delighted to be asked to speak tonight at the Eleusinian Banquet given annually by Beta Epsilon of Chi Omega; for this speech indicates your confidence in me, as you give me your award.

I remark concerning the history of women's rules at the University of North Carolina. If the campus is microcosm and the world is macrocosm, then campus rules reflect the rules of society. Much that man has done through all the millenia has been done to defend his society-- his life, his property (especially his home), his children. The Chinese between the Third Century and the Sixth Century, A.D., built for 1500 miles The Great Wall. Yet after gun powder there was no need for walls or walled cities. In 1526 the Sultan of





Delhi was defeated by Baber the Mogul, who used both great and small fire arms. With Elizabeth I in the late sixteenth century the joust became a sporting event, not an act of battle: gun powder had already vanquished the knight on horseback. The necessity for erecting walls had ended; yet man continued to live in walled enclosures, family by family, generation after generation. Man worked in the forest, the river and the field as woodsman, fisherman, farmer. He maintained his walls. Pyramus and Thisbe, the eternal Babylonian lovers of Ovid's Metamorphoses, were separated by a stone wall which eternally they kissed. I quote from Chaucer's The Legend of Good Women:

And every day this wal they wolde threte,  
 And wisshe to God that it were down ybete.  
 Thus wolde they seyn: "Alas, thow wik-  
                   kede wal!  
 Thorgh thyn envye thow us lettest al.  
 Why nylyt thow cleve, or fallen al a-two?  
 Or at the leste, but thou woldist so,  
 Yit woldest thow but ones lat us mete,  
 Or ones that we myghte kyssen swete,  
 Thanne were we covered of oure cares colde."

Through the centuries men have been walled away from women. In all cultures the education of the young is taken seriously. Babies books of the 15th and 16th centuries give us instruction for young men: Don't dirty your cloth or cup, don't chatter, don't let your nails get black, hold your hand before your mouth to hide spittle, keep your knife clean and sharp, don't play with the cat and the dog while you are at table, do not point with your finger, wipe your mouth before you drink from the common cup, and so forth.

Oddly enough, there are more instructions for young men than there are for young women in the mediaeval courtesy books. I suppose that rules for young men were rather varied, whereas rules for young women were so very strict that they did not have to be set forth. One courtesy book says, "The man that thou shall

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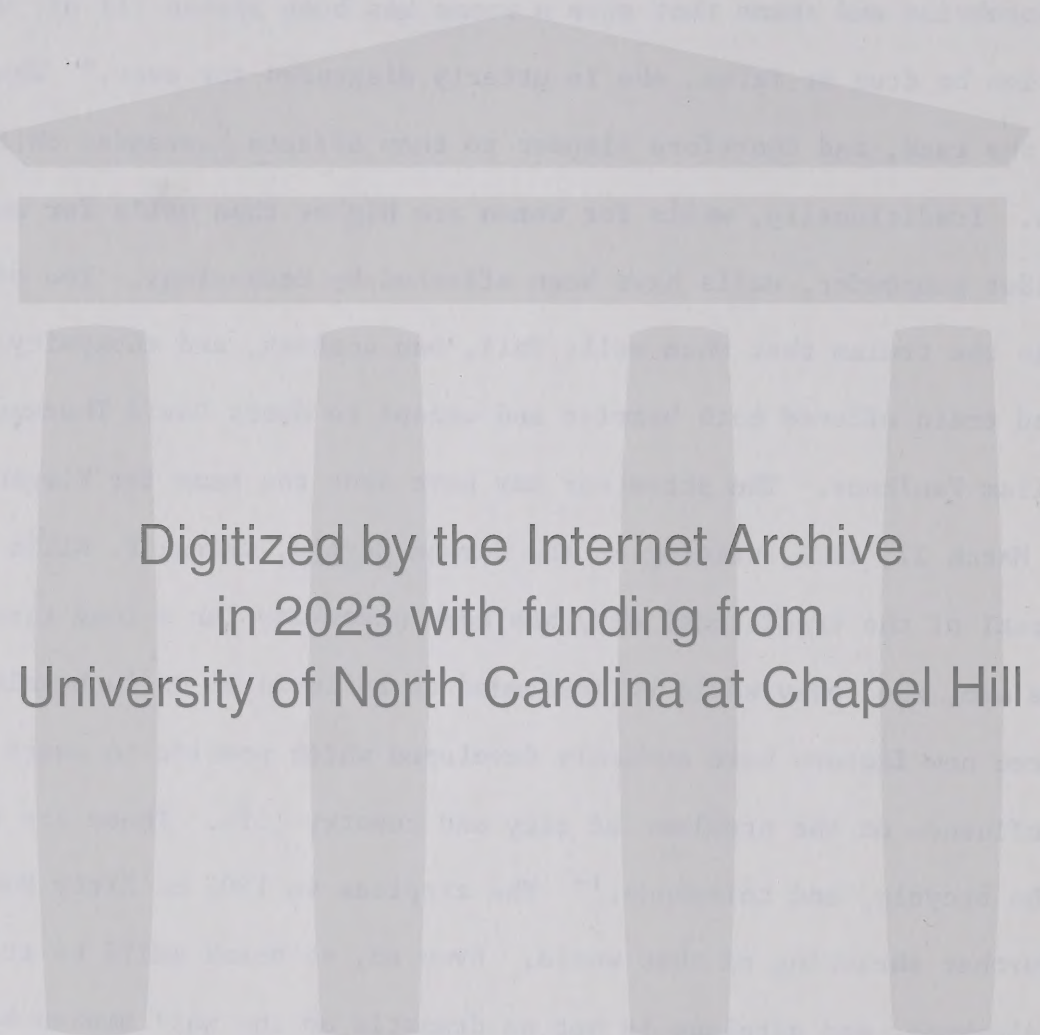




wed before God with a ring/Love thou him and honor most of earthly things."

Matrimony was woman's goal. Yet men knew that a woman's reputation had to be blameless. Castiglione, writing early in the sixteenth century says: "We ourselves, as men, have made it a rule that a dissonant way of life is not to be thought evil or blameworthy or disgraceful, whereas in women it leads to such complete opprobrium and shame that once a women has been spoken ill of, whether the accusation be true or false, she is utterly disgraced for ever." Women are mothers of the race, and therefore slander to them affects husbands, children, and parents. Traditionally, walls for women are higher than walls for men.

Besides gunpowder, walls have been affected by technology. Too often forgotten is the truism that when walls fall, men scatter, and anonymity results. The sym-  
ic railroad train offered both barrier and escape to Henry David Thoreau, Sinclair Lewis, William Faulkner. The streetcar may have done the same for Virginia Woolf. On Friday, March 27, 1977, writing in the Durham Herald, George F. Wills says: "The dispersal of the traditional city has been under way for a long time. In 1895 a wise man, who today would be condemned to be known as an 'urbanologist,' wrote: 'Three new factors have suddenly developed which promise to exert a powerful influence on the problems of city and country life. These are the trolley, the bicycle, and telephone.'" The airplane in 1903 at Kitty Hawk made possible further shrinking of this world. Even so, to break walls by trolley, bicycle, telephone, and airplane is not so dramatic as the wall broken by the automobile. My mother had her first automobile ride in 1899, but then the automobile affected only a few. By 1908, however, the mass produced Flivver of Henry Ford (1863 - 1947) put the automobile within range of the pocketbook of most Americans, giving mobility to the college student. Indeed, when later in this University we were having a controversy concerning so-called open houses, one father said to me: "I should prefer that my daughter entertain a man friend in her University bedroom rather than to entertain him in his parked car. The



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automobile is the mobile bedroom."

I went to college in the era of Fitzgerald's Great Gatsby. You will remember that Gatsby's car was driven at the terrific rate of 50 miles an hour -- but that was a long time ago. When I was your age young ladies did not go to men's apartments or hotel or motel rooms. Drinking of alcoholic beverages was illegal. If we lived in the same town with our parents, we lived with our parents unless we were "fast." The hassle was over riding in an automobile with a man: parental permission was usually required -- no permission, no joy riding. Closing hours were fixed - 10, 11, 12, 1 - dependent upon the exigencies of the occasion and the location of the college. Rules for college women took on significance: it was a fact that rules for women controlled both young men and young women.

When I came to this University in 1946, rules for college women everywhere, I think, were spelled out except in avant garde institutions like Antioch, Reed, or men's colleges where a few women had matriculated. Our closing hours here were generous: 11, 12, 1, and 2. Women under 23 years of age lived in the residence hall system unless they were graduate women. The sign-out system was mandatory. Only 5 or 6 freshmen (except Chapel Hill non-dormitory residents) were admitted annually. Approximately 35 freshmen students of the newly instituted School of Nursing were admitted in the fall of 1951. With freshmen women, changes came, rules and closed-study being modeled after rules of the Woman's College (now the University of North Carolina at Greensboro). About 1951, if drinking occurred in a fraternity house, the woman visitor, if she were a student, was supposed to get up and leave the house. This unfortunate rule we had removed on July 1, 1953.

Rules continued fairly constant. One established rule had to do with the fact that a woman student might not go to a man's apartment by herself. The rule was repeatedly tested. Some twenty years ago, Joel Fleishman, now Vice President of Duke University, lived in an apartment in Roberson House, where now stands the Ackland Gallery. On an autumn afternoon he telephoned me





frantically, saying: "Girls are raking leaves in my yard. They need to go to the bathroom. What are they to do?"

I said: "Take them to your bathroom." He said: "You have a rule against it."

In 1961 - 1962 I held a Smith-Mundt professorship at the University of Saigon in Vietnam. When I returned to the campus I felt disturbance in the air. Was this, I wondered, due to my lack of sensitivity, or to my having been off campus? Or due to my being confronted by a group of students with whom I had not been working, students whom I did not know? In the spring of 1963 I enunciated the age-old ruling that women students might not go to a man's apartment unless another couple should be present. So far as I know, I was uniformly supported by sophisticated men and women of my own generation. As one friend of mine said: "I tell my daughter, 'It is just not being done.'" But the campus was upset with me over my insistence that four persons-- but not two--might be present in a man's quarters. Just before spring examinations, 1963, the howl became a roar. To the Daily Tar Heel, I was the villain. The president of the Student Body instituted a mediation board to mediate between irate students and the Dean of Women. Hours were spent, not much was accomplished. A summer vacation came. In the Handbook for Women Students, issued in the summer of 1964, the suggestion was made that two couples might be properly asked to be present if a woman student be invited to a man's apartment, this being optional for upperclassmen, mandatory for freshmen. Time, not personalities, worked out whatever schism had occurred.

Still I did not see much difference between the students with whom I had been accustomed to work and the student with whom I was becoming accustomed to work. The Valkyries and Fleece tapping continued. On April 30, 1967, the Tar Heel stated that for the fall of 1967 there would be eight courses taught in the residences-- "There are three courses going on now." Valkyries sponsored





a conference on women in 1965, students sponsored a conference on the Theory and Philosophy of Rules in Government applicable to women students, on November 11 and 12, 1967. In general, these conferences gave rationale for orderly government.

In the mid-sixties the situation in the dormitories was relatively constant: guests had to register in a book, closing hours were at 11, 12, 1, 2; telephones were cut off at closing hours and stayed off until 8 A. M.; calls were limited to five minutes (this rule was never enforced). Quiet hours were from 7:30 P. M. to 10:30 A. M. No showers were to be taken after 1/2 hour after closing hours. There was to be no noise after closing. A dress code proscribed shorts and slacks, and prescribed skirts and blouses. Women students were able to visit social areas of the fraternity houses if chaperones were present during dormitory hours; but any function was to be calendared by the administration. On May 5, 1967, I quibbled about men using social rooms of the upper floors of Morrison as places' that girls could visit.

In the Spring of 1967 women could not visit overnight in Town unless they were invited by a bona fide hostess. The rule was: A girl cannot spend the night in a motel, hotel, boarding house or apartment without parental permission. In March, 1968, however, there was a breakthrough for the students: It was decided that they could spend the night in whatever apartments they cared to if they had parental permission.

In 1968-69 a visiting board of nine members was set up for determining about visiting dormitories with attendant social rules, thereby putting dormitories on the same basis as fraternity houses. The Board included the Chairman of the Men's Residence Council, the Chairman of the Women's Residence Council, a representative from the Office of the Dean of Women, and a representative from the Office of the Dean of Men. Women could go into men's social rooms from 7 A. M. to 2 A. M. provided the activity had been calendared in advance, and so on.





Through 1966-67 I was asked: "Who tells you that women undergraduate students under 23, according to the rules of the past, are compelled to live in residence halls?" I said: "I have always been informed that this is the ruling of the Board of Trustees." The Dean of Students asked Billie Curtis to make a search -- and there was no such rule. Accordingly, in September, 1967, at the request of Chancellor Sitterson and Dean Cathey, I went before the Women's Residence Council and stated that women over 21 could move to apartments and that upperclassmen, except junior transfers in their first year, could move to apartments, with parental permission. There was no immediate exodus to apartments; but predictably the large mass in the dormitory began to consist of freshmen, sophomores, and junior transfers, although student leaders tended to remain in the dormitory. The ability to move to apartments, however, was a breakthrough for students.

The President's office on November 13, 1968, wrote us to say that women 21 years of age and older could live off campus; under 21 years of age if they were juniors and seniors with parental permission. The 26th amendment, certified on July 7, 1971, extended this provision, by giving eighteen year olds the vote. If one group could live off campus, why not two? And leadership in the dormitories was no longer so much prized as it had been.

Possible conflict lay in the administration's opposition to no closing hours. Extended closing hours (because of the cost of keeping buildings manned) seemed illogical. I was willing to extend closing hours to a reasonable time, or to give late leave to cover reasonable exceptions; but I was opposed to giving no closing hours to large groups of women students. On November 1, 1968, after a series of incidents whereby men broke into women's dormitories, Burns guards were hired by the University, and we continued with Burns guards until June, 1970. Thus there was no reason for not giving self-limiting hours to upperclassmen who had parental permission -- and this was done.





Between 1970 and 1972 dormitories were opened by campus police or dormitory administration. It is astonishing how much of a wrangle that got us into. By February, 1970, sophomores wanted self-limiting hours with parental permission.

The Chancellor on November 8, 1968, when Ken Day was President of the Student Body, instructed Libby Idol (chairman of the Women's Residence Council) and me to implement self-limiting hours.

Students began working on regulations for 1969-70 to establish the transition policy. It was decided that upperclassmen or women over 21 could have self-limiting hours. A girl should not have to sign out unless parental permission decreed that she had to sign out. However, a self-locating card was to be kept on file if the girl wished to sign out. In other words, the girl could sign out; but there was no rule that she had to. By the fall of 1970 it was decreed that parental permission was not necessary for self-limiting hours for upperclasswomen. However, the locator card was available. Furthermore, girls could live off campus without parental permission beginning in the fall of 1970. By the spring of 1970 the sophomores with certain academic averages had self-limiting hours, but the parents were obliged to sign parental permission forms. On June 21, 1970, sign-outs were approved by the Chancellor in this fashion: (1) Sophomores would have self-limiting hours but with parental permission. (2) No grade point requirement was to be had for self-limiting hours. (3) A locator card was to be kept.

In 1967 and the following years the cry was for having girls visit in men's bedrooms, and for men to visit women in women's bedrooms. This was something that the administration had opposed. On May 22, 1967, I was at a sister college and noted that in the dormitory towers a woman student had to sign up with a man's house-mother so that she could go to a boy's room. The central administration told me that the system worked well; privately I was told that it was not working at all. I gather that in many colleges what happened depended on the person you were talking with.



In August, 1968, Dr. Lillian Lehman sent a questionnaire to parents of senior women, asking their opinion concerning having men visit women in women's bedrooms and vice versa. The statement was made that men are permitted to visit in women's social rooms in dormitories and sorority houses 7 days a week, noon to closing hours, and that women are permitted to visit in social rooms of men's residences from noon to closing hours 7 days a week. As for women visiting in men's dormitories, 24 parents thought the proposal too restrictive; 73 acceptably restrictive, 1041 acceptable; 306 exceptionally lenient, 194 too lenient. As for men visiting women in women's dormitories, 17 thought policies were too restrictive, 67 thought policies acceptably restrictive, 1108 acceptable, 282 acceptably lenient, 128 too lenient. The Chancellor then established a faculty-student Committee on visitation. The Committee surveyed 40 institutions and found that 34 had open house. On November 14, 1968, the Committee recommended that open house be established. On November 15, Dean Cathey began procedures. On November 18 the Advisory Committee of Student Affairs passed favorably the Committee's recommendation. The Committee reported to the Chancellor in December, 1968, and visitation began on December 5, 1968. Provisions were made for orientation for hostesses and hosts and for keeping guestbooks in houses. The maximum number of open houses per week was three, or 10 open houses per month. Present would be a host committee, three members being on duty at all times. Restrooms were to be provided, the doors to the bedrooms were to remain open or at least ajar. Monthly evaluations were to be made. The experiment was to be evaluated by the Committee on open house with the notion that the experiment would terminate at the end of the 1968-69 year. When the Committee on open house made evaluation in the spring, the Committee commented on the pettiness of certain rules which might be decided on a more normal day-by-day basis; the Committee decided against the open door policy. On April 8, 1970, the demand for liberalization of the open house was stated by the Committee on University Residence Living --i.e., closed doors and no longer open doors.





The Chancellor was willing to implement part of these recommendations. He was adamant, however, in saying that doors were to remain open during visitation, and open house was to occur only during hours when women's dormitories were open. The student body was not satisfied -- they assumed that the administration was infringing upon their rights.

On September 25, 1970, Dean Cathey wrote the president of the student body, Mr. Tommy Bello, to say that the student Legislature should be required to "determine the code of conduct as it relates to open house" and that student courts would adjudicate those cases, and not adjudicate only the violation of individual residence halls when the violation occurred concerning visitation. Mr. Bello was displeased. In June, 1971, we were working hard on hours, doors, proctors, no proctors, and we decided that only after classes began would we have visitation. This was waving a red flag at the students who wanted to have open house during orientation. Basically, moreover, a large group of students wanted to have visitation 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. On the other hand, let it be said that many students were totally indifferent to the fuss. In 1971 - 1972 we continued our activities (honestly, I often wonder how we got anything done in those days except work on visitation). Open house was to take place every day when school was in session from noon to 1 a. m., from noon to 2 a. m. If any house decided to be less liberal, then the house could be less liberal by vote of the members. Exceptions could be made to have the door ajar (this always gets to be a joke; what does ajar mean? Is it the space of a book? If so, why not a match book?) Someone had to be proctor, publicity and public relations had to be defensible, rules were to be enforced for the remainder of the year and not from year to year, women were to be tried in student courts if violations occurred, the Dean of Men and the Dean of Women would be informed. Immediately, however, there was a hassle:





If visitation could start at noon, why not at 11:45? If it ended at 2 a. m., why not at 2:15? Why should doors be unlocked? What is the philosophy? If the person had repeated violations, what was to happen? Some of the women's houses elected not to participate in open houses at all. Meantime, letters were coming in. One letter is dated March, 1969: "I want to express my displeasure to the recent ruling ... to permit visitors on the floors and in the rooms ... this procedure prevents others from being able to study because of the noise and disturbance ... caused by the visitors. It also prevents my daughter and others from getting the proper rest ... hope this ruling will soon be revoked." Another parent in late 1968 wrote: "I am simply appalled by the fact that you would even consider asking anyone whether or not the University of North Carolina should be concerned with the social behavior of women students and whether or not the University should set guidelines for student behavior." Another wrote: "I'm concerned and surprised to see that the University-- its administration and faculty alike --take seriously enough the proposal of no closing hours for women living on University housing to submit the matter to an apparent poll." As we worked on rules I perceive two fallacies: if a committee spends time on an issue, the committee's decision has to be both intelligent and righteous-- that is nonsense: but that point was believed. The other fallacy is that if a project is about to fail for young men, add some young girls to the project. Use the girls as come-ons for the project; but if you do not blatantly advertise the girls as come-ons, the public will not be wise enough to see the nature of the endeavor. This, too, is a fallacy.

In the spring vacation, 1972, we held to the fact that open house would not take place except when the University was in session. In April, 1972, we had no change in open house despite the student request of 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

On January 6, 1971, the consolidated University had given us a dormitory visiting policy: the hours of visitation were not to exceed 12 noon to 1 a. m., or 12 noon to 2 a. m.; doors would remain unlocked, quiet hours would be observed. The policy was to be effective February 1, 1971, and was to be reviewed by the



Administrative Council in June, 1972.

In order to implement some of these changes, an Implementation Committee was assigned to the Dean of Women's office in January, 1970. This Implementation Committee consisted of 7 students, 7 faculty - administrative staff members. This group was to implement all the rules and all the changes and take proposals to the Association of Women Students for ratification or rejection. Students had been irate that the Implementation Committee did not get off the ground during the Christmas holidays of 1969; this objection was absurd. The Implementation Committee in anger began its work. Early in 1970 I wondered whether or not the Implementation Committee would be a burden to me. It was not; and the Implementation proved itself both wise and useful. With the spring term of 1971, Judy Hippler, President of Phi Beta Kappa and Chairman of the Association of Women Students, decided to call the group the Women's Forum. This change in name was made with the belief that the major changes in rules for college women had already been made -- women could live off campus with or without parental permission. Women students might visit in men's fraternities as well as in men's dormitories; and women could visit in both bedrooms and social rooms. Self limiting hours had been worked through with or without parental permission. In sorority houses, in order to effect self-limiting hours, keys were to be used; but people were to be used for dormitories, because the numbers of women involved were greater. It had been determined that doors were to be kept locked after certain hours in women's residences; but this was a matter of security. Parental permission was needed for a few things, but for only a very few privileges. Restrictions were so minimal as to be non-existent. Under the Women's Forum, the Implementation Committee had worked with rules. The Women's Forum, however, worked on honorary degrees for women, slots for women as Distinguished Alumnae, women speakers at Commencement, courses for women, facilities for women (especially in Physical Education).





Meantime, changes had been taking place in the nation. There had been violence on campuses in Mississippi in 1953, at the University of Alabama in 1956. Sit-ins began in Greensboro in 1960. An organization, Students for Democratic Action, was organized at Port Huron, Michigan, in 1962. Perhaps because of the SDA movement, leadership for desegregation was offered on Monday, December 16, 1963, at the Pines Restaurant; at Watts, the Pines, John Carson's, the Rock Pile, Brady's, the Tar Heel Sandwich Shop, all in January, 1964. John Dunne early in January, 1964, was Chairman of the Chapter of the Congress of Racial Equality. I myself went to inspect the local jail, in which a number of our women students were being housed. On April 24, 1966, the Tar Heel carried a notice to draft dodgers: "twelve ways to beat the system." The same paper on April 24, 1966, said: "The sight of Beaumont trailing a cloud of smoke from his ever present cigar has signalled the end of many potential panty raids." (On April 30, 1967, Cassius Clay filed suit against the government regarding Clay's refusal to join the armed forces.) On March 6, 1969, the Janitor's Grievances were met. On March 6, 1969, students questioned double jeopardy. In 1968-1969 the food strike against Lenoir occurred. On March 6, 1969 Governor Bob Scott ordered Lenoir Cafeteria to be re-opened. The Saga strike occurred in November, 1969.

Stanford was in a state of disturbance between 1963 and 1965, Columbia in 1968. The University of California, which had been a seat of dissent since the late 1950's, was torn apart in 1967-1968. In the spring of 1968 President Knight of Duke University had permitted 250 students to sit in, in the presidential mansion. Cornell and Wisconsin endured the same situation. Everywhere, an affluent society spawned unrest.

And on November 1, 1966, the British author, John Taylor, said that American men are the "worse dressed men in the world ... penance for privilege ... ugliness. .. show off."





The 1964 Civil Rights Act -- an edict prohibiting discrimination because of race, sex, national origin -- should have torn down a wall. And it did. But the techniques which had brought about changes in matters racial, as students were to learn, could bring about changes in parietal rules on college campuses, thereby altering student life styles. Our campus reflected this philosophy. Dramatized by Martin Luther King, a march on Washington in 1963 had brought 200,000 people together. The Selma-to-Montgomery march in 1965, and Abernethy's poor people's march to Washington in 1968, illustrated the fact that group action could bring about change.

With change, however, came violence -- in the media, in the streets, in and out of the armed forces. With violence came child abuse. Meantime, in 1970 new feminist groups were springing full grown from Athene's brain. But with violence and Equal Rights came a demand for liberalized laws regarding abortion. The law was changed in 1967, and dramatically changed in 1969-1970. The landmark case, decided on January 22, 1973, by the Supreme Court, was *Rowe vs. Wade*.

Again, let us consider that the macrocosm and the microcosm are related. What happens in the world happens on the campus. With so many vicissitudes born of force and struggle, comes a new era. The mythical bird, the phoenix, as is well known, after having lived half a millinimum, becomes consumed in its own ashes, and born anew, flies heavenward, in youthful luxuriance. I present a question: would the phoenix, looking back, find that it was leaving a better world? Or just a different world?





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